March 4, 2015

Hamza Yusuf
President
Zaytuna College
2401 Le Conte Ave,
Berkeley, CA 94709

Dear President Yusuf:

At its meeting February 18–20, 2015, the Commission considered the report of the Seeking Accreditation Visit team that conducted an on-site review of Zaytuna College on October 28 – 31, 2014. Commission members also reviewed the Seeking Accreditation Visit report submitted by the institution prior to the visit and its January 16, 2015, response to the visiting team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues: Dr. Colleen Keyes, Waheed Rasheed, Dr. Mahan Mirza, Pervez Qureshi, Mubeen Saifullah, Dr. Hatem Bazian, Liliana Hanson, and ALO Sumaira Akhtar. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission’s deliberations.

This visit was scheduled to evaluate the institution’s status with regard to the Commission’s Standards of Accreditation in order to determine whether to grant Initial Accreditation; the team’s findings are addressed below. The team inquired into the institution’s response to issues identified for attention by the Eligibility Review Committee. In particular, the team found the Board to be more appropriately engaged in strategic rather than operational issues. The institution has also continued to develop its assessment procedures and to refine its learning outcomes pertaining to general education and information literacy.

Based on the team’s report and the other information sources as identified above, the Commission has determined the following with regard to the institution’s compliance with each of the WSCUC Standards of Accreditation.

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives.

The Commission has determined that the institution has met this Standard.

The Commission commends the institution’s achievements under this Standard for the clarity of its mission and for the degree to which the mission has brought harmony of purpose and productivity of effort among the staff and faculty of the institution.
The Commission affirms the team’s findings that Zaytuna has come into existence to fulfill a critical defining role within the Islamic faith community, both locally and globally. Guided by this mission, the institution’s curriculum, pedagogy, and student affairs activities cohere to produce promising outcomes for its students.

**Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions.**

The Commission has determined that the institution has met this Standard.

The Commission commends the institution’s achievements under this Standard for creating a rigorous and high quality learning experience, one that – in the team’s judgment – can be viewed as an exemplar in the liberal arts tradition. The devotion and availability of the faculty, together with their high expectations for student achievement, are setting a worthy norm for the institution as it develops its academic culture. The Commission notes that, while Zaytuna has developed an exceptionally demanding undergraduate curriculum, its students enthusiastically embrace the distinctive character of this educational opportunity.

**Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability.**

The Commission has determined that the institution has met this Standard.

The Commission commends the institution’s achievements under this Standard for securing significant conceptual and financial support for the development of the College from both national and international members of the Islamic community. Drawing on these resources in support of both capital and operational costs, the College is mostly able to achieve its goal of seeing its students graduate without carrying any educational debt. The Commission commends the institution for achieving this student-specific goal while at the same time demonstrating financial sustainability for the institution as a whole.

**Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement.**

The Commission has determined that the institution has met this Standard.

The Commission commends the institution’s achievements under this Standard for implementing a variety of robust quality assurance measures. Critical indicators are monitored in the areas of student achievement, finance, co-curricular learning, advancement, and other key operational areas; and these metrics are used to inform decision-making. The Commission particularly commends the annual three-day faculty retreat during which multiple indicators of student achievement are reviewed and identified areas for curricular change are promptly addressed. With self-assessment being a central part of the Islamic tradition, the institution appears poised to continue its quality journey.

In view of the above, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Special Visit Report and grant Initial Accreditation for a period of five years.
2. Schedule the next comprehensive review with the Off-Site Review in spring 2019 and the Accreditation Visit scheduled for fall 2019.


4. Request a Special Visit in spring 2018 to determine continued progress in the areas identified below.

In taking this action to grant Initial Accreditation, the Commission confirms that Zaytuna College has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Student Learning and Success; Quality and Improvement; and Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability. The Commission also confirms that the institution has successfully completed this review conducted under the 2103 Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review, the institution is expected to maintain its compliance with WSCUC Standards and its commitment to continuous quality improvement. It is also expected to continue its progress in the following areas:

- **Board development** through engagement with organizations that will aid the continuing embrace of best governance practices in higher education (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.9)

- **Institutional research**, with emphasis on building internal capacities to obtain, analyze, and use key performance data (CFRs 4.1, 4.2)

- **Policy development**, particularly with regard to faculty roles and human resources (CFRs 3.2)

Accreditation status is not granted retroactively. Institutions granted the status of accreditation must use the following statement if they wish to describe the status publicly:

Zaytuna College is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission, 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, (510) 748-9001.

The accredited status of a program should not be misrepresented. The accreditation granted by WSCUC refers to the quality of the institution as a whole. Because institutional accreditation does not imply specific accreditation of any particular program at the institution, statements such as “this program is accredited” or “this degree is accredited” are incorrect and misleading. The phrase “fully accredited” is to be avoided, since no partial accreditation is possible.

The Commission stipulates that this action encompasses the degree offered by at the time of this action, the Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Law and Theology. In keeping with the WSCUC Policy on Degree Level Approval, Zaytuna College is designated as having an “I” (Individual) status for the degree level currently being offered. This means that all new degree programs initiated by the institution will require prior approval through WSCUC’s Substantive Change process. Degree programs that have been reviewed and included under this action may be extended to other campuses of the institution without prior Substantive Change action.
Federal law requires that the WSCUC address and phone number appear in the institution’s catalog.

Institutions granted Initial Accreditation are required to:

1. Submit an Annual Report in the format required by the Commission.

2. Keep the Commission informed of any significant changes or developments, especially those that require prior approval according to the Commission’s Substantive Change Policy. Zaytuna College is approved to offer only the following degree at its current locations:

   Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Law and Theology

   Please consult the Substantive Change Manual and confer with your WSCUC liaison about any proposed new degree programs, off-campus sites, online offerings, and/or changes in governance or ownership, to determine if these matters should be approved in advance by WSCUC.

3. Pay Annual Membership Dues calculated on the institution’s student FTE and prorated from the date of this action. An Annual Dues statement will be sent under separate cover.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Zaytuna College’s governing board in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution’s response to the specific issues identified in these documents. The team report and the Commission’s action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the College undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability and we are grateful for your continued support of this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Petrisko
President

MEP/rw

Cc: William Ladusaw, Commission Chair
    Sumaira Akhtar, ALO
    Pervez Qureshi, Board Chair
    Members of the Special Visit team
    Richard Winn, WSCUC Staff Liaison